

CONSERVATION LANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 2, 2019

4:00 PM

Currents

600 Cregg Lane

Missoula, MT 59802

Members present: Beverly Dupree, Carol Fischer, Kathleen Kennedy, Karen Sippy, Hannah Specht, Jamison Starbuck, Giles Thelen

Non-voting members present: Liz Bradley, Patrick Bridegam

Others present: Staff present; Jolanda Cummings and Morgan Valliant.
Guest present; Corey Fisher, Gerhard Kundsén, Jim Brown
New Committee member present; Teagan Hayes

1. Approval of Minutes from October 07, 2019 and November 04, 2019

Minutes for October 07, 2019 and November 04, 2019 were approved as submitted.

2. Public comment on non-agenda items

Morgan introduced new committee member Teagan Hayes. Committee members introduced themselves and Teagan gave a brief statement about her background.

Gerhard Kundsén and Jim Brown from Five Valleys Audubon Society attended to give input on the Clark Fork Island Recreation Management Plan.

Corey Fisher attended he is a resident in the area of the Clark Fork Island Recreation Management Plan.

3. Action Items

No action items on agenda

4. Discussion items

4.1 Introduction of Open Space Lands Acquisitions Manager

This will be held for a future agenda item.

4.2 Clark Fork Island Recreation Management Plan

Morgan Valliant presented the preliminary draft and discussed the next developments he would like to see met. Next steps include; o have a completed final draft compiled within the next month, hold a public comment period January 2020 or February 2020, and then submit a final recommendation. The plan would be brought to the March 2020 Park Board meeting with the possibility of being adopted.

Morgan reviewed types of parks; park reserve, public natural areas and urban parks and how each are managed. Morgan recapped that the committee had decided in a previous meeting that the Clark Fork Islands Recreation area would be a park reserve.

Morgan Valliant discussed areas on the Clark Fork Islands Orientation Map. Morgan explained the different parcels located on the map, who had ownership, including City ownership. He gave approximate dates of when the parcels were acquired. Morgan noted one of the most significant things about this plan is the future expansion of the Milwaukee Trail and possible expansion of the Great American Trail. Morgan explained that the City has a conditional easement that will allow access across the Clouse property if the city can connect the trail to Mullan. City Staff spent time out in the field completing surveys and documenting the resource inventory. Staff recorded a diversity of plants and animals in the North Bank slew area.

Jim Brown from Five Valleys Audubon Society discussed the nature's values in the Clark Fork nature area around the North Bank slew and the importance of the channels in this location for ducklings as the area shows presence of four different species of duck. Jim noted the habitat is very important as it has tall shrubs and trees that many birds rely on. Jim asked the committee to consider cavity nesting habitat when locating the trail to ensure that it doesn't go through the habitat. May through July are the most important times to not disturb nesting. Jim noted that dedicating this area to a natural area is very important.

Morgan Valliant discussed the difference between primary, secondary and local access points. The Clark Fork Island Recreation Management Plan proposes that the primary access point be located at the Wastewater Trailhead. This area would provide access to the public in an area of town where few opportunities exist. Discussion was had between committee members if a takeout boat ramp would work at this site. The boat ramp would not be installed until future years but would need to be in the management plan if it's something that might be considered. Morgan asked committee members to consider if they want the boat ramp in the plan and what possible impacts a boat ramp would have in this area.

The secondary access point would be at Railroad Bridge. This area would not have a parking lot but would allow street parking. There would be rules and regulation signs as well as a sign showing change of land management priorities.

Local access points would be located at Hamilton Way and Hiberta Street.. This area would have signs informing the public that they were entering onto public lands. Committee members asked about boardwalks in the area and Morgan informed the committee he has not yet examined this area. He noted most trails will stay intact and there are a few areas that would require more work. Overall trails would be natural in the area.

Morgan Valliant discussed trail and recreation areas at the following locations; Milwaukee Line Commuter Trail, Garden City Ponds Trail, Birding Loop Trail and Hiberta Street seasonal trails. The Milwaukee line commuter trail will occur as time and funding allows. This will require a new bridge, and the building of two other bridges. It would also allow e-bikes to use the trail system until they reached the gravel area. Garden City ponds trail would have a natural surface and would be an improvement to a packed gravel surface trail when needed. This trail would be non-motorized and would not allow

e-bikes. There would be an opportunity to put in a culvert, which would reconnect waterways that had been filled. Birding Loop trail would be pedestrian only and would not allow dogs. Committee members discussed the possibility of putting a low fence to conserve the habitat from dogs. The Hiberta Street trail would allow dogs and have a voice constraint for dogs.

Morgan Valliant provided information about public hunting and enforcing the block management program. Hunting during archery season would be permitted. Committee members brought up concerns about safety and how to bring awareness to the public that hunting is occurring in area. Liz Bradley from Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) informed the committee that these areas already have signage, and that FWP looks for areas that allow hunting in urban areas. She discussed advantages of allowing hunting and how it helps managing urban deer.

Morgan Valliant relayed Information about additional infrastructure was discussed. Additional infrastructure needed includes; fencing around the wastewater plant and additional fencing up against the pond, wooden rail fences to provide barriers along the bridges two gates located along the Milwaukee trail but possibly would not be needed once the bridges were build, and signage as appropriate for the area including educational signs. Committee members recommended possibly changing location of bike rack to Cooley Park. In addition, committee members thought it would be nice to have a bench for residents. Morgan asked the committee to think if a bird blind similar to Lee Metcalf model would work in this area.

4.3 Current Projects Conservation Lands

No items were discussed.

5. Future items

Introduction of Open Space Lands Acquisition manager.

6. Announcements

No announcements were discussed.

7. CLAC Board Member Q&A on non-agenda items

No items were discussed.

8. Adjournment

Adjournment at 6:04

Minutes take by Jolanda Cummings